



For Immediate Release

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NEWS RELEASE

WNV Detected In Salt Lake County Mosquito Pools

Health officials urge residents to take precautions

(Salt Lake County) – The Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) has confirmed that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquito pools within Salt Lake County boundaries. Public health officials are urging residents to take precautionary measures to avoid exposure to the virus.

Earlier this month, local Mosquito Abatement Districts (MADs) began trapping and collecting mosquito samples at numerous locations throughout Salt Lake County. Samples from ten mosquito pools within Salt Lake County were tested on June 10th, with six positive test results.

“Like the sentinel chicken program, testing mosquitoes is another part of our statewide surveillance program and lets us know when West Nile virus is active so we can take steps to reduce the chances of human exposure,” says Ilene Risk, SLVHD epidemiologist. “The most important step is for residents to use mosquito repellent, especially from dusk until dawn when West Nile virus-infected mosquitoes are biting.”

The Salt Lake City MAD will be increasing their abatement activities at several locations over the next few days. “Our positive mosquito pools are currently limited to wetlands outside Salt Lake City,” explains Dr. Sam Dickson of the Salt Lake City Mosquito Abatement District. “This is an excellent early warning for us to begin aggressive abatement measures, including ground and aerial mosquito spraying.”

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Public health officials say that while fogging greatly helps reduce mosquito populations, residents need to take personal precautions to avoid exposure to mosquito bites. Prevention measures include the following:

- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET or Picaridin when outdoors from dusk to dawn, when West Nile-infected mosquitoes are biting,
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants while outdoors,
- Remove standing water in tires or other containers to eliminate mosquito breeding areas.

Most people who become infected with West Nile virus will not experience any symptoms, while roughly 20 percent of those infected will develop moderate to severe flu-like symptoms. Less than 1 percent of infected individuals will experience the most severe form of West Nile virus infection, which can include headache, paralysis and other illness of the brain and spinal cord and can cause prolonged or permanent disability. In 2007, 70 human cases of West Nile and two deaths were reported in Utah.

For more information on West Nile virus, mosquito repellent and other precautions, visit the SLVHD Web site at www.slvhealth.org or call (801) 534-4600.

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